

Application No. 10/720,594

REMARKS

The Applicant and the undersigned thank Examiner Nguyen for his careful review of this application. Consideration of the present application is respectfully requested in light of the above amendments to the claims and in view of the following remarks. Claims 4-16 have been rejected. Applicant has amended Claims 4 and 8. Applicant has canceled Claims 7 and 9. Upon entry of the amendments, Claims 4-6, 8, and 10-16 are pending in the subject application with none having been allowed. The independent claim for this application is Claim 4.

I. Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner rejected Claims 4-16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,545,017 to Richardson ("*Richardson*") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,527,130 to Ruddy ("*Ruddy*") and several assertions by the Examiner that claimed elements are well-known or of common knowledge in the art. The Applicant respectfully offers the following remarks to traverse these pending rejections.

A. Independent Claim 4

The rejection of independent Claim 4 is respectfully traversed in view of the submitted amendments. It is respectfully submitted that the combination of *Richardson* and *Ruddy* fails to teach or suggest all of the recitations enumerated in amended Claim 4. Independent Claim 4 was amended to include the limitations recited in original dependent Claim 9 and Claim 7, from which it depends. The Examiner rejected Claim 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being well known in the art.

Applicant hereby submits that the limitations of original Claim 9 are not well-known in the art of oil-field operations and that the Examiner's assertion that the limitations of Claim 9, now incorporated into amended Claim 4, are well-known in the art is erroneous. The Applicant hereby demands that the Examiner provide documentary authority for the basis of his statement. In support of Applicant's argument, Applicant directs the Examiner's attention to Table 1 in columns 7 and 8 of *Richardson*.

Table 1 in *Richardson* describes two directions of travel, raising and lowering, for the drilling apparatus, and two load levels, empty and loaded, for each direction of travel. As shown in example 1 during a raising operation with an empty line weight, an empty traveling block

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begins to slow down **twenty feet** from the crown out position. *Richardson*, col. 7:68 (Table I). On the other hand, as shown in example 2, a loaded traveling block does not reach its slow down region until it is **one foot** from the crown out position. *Richardson*, col. 8:10 (Table I). Thus, at first glance, it appears that the length of the upper slow down zone is inversely proportional to momentum rather than proportion as described in amended Claim 4.

Further, since momentum is calculated as mass multiplied by velocity, the only way for the empty traveling block moving at 7.5 feet per second to have a greater momentum (and thus, make the distance proportional to momentum) than the loaded traveling block moving at 3 feet per second is for the loaded traveling block to have a mass that is less than 250 percent of the mass of the empty traveling block. To put more exact numbers on this example, if the empty traveling block carries 100 pounds of line weight, the full load of the loaded traveling block could only be 250 pounds. Those of ordinary skill in the art know that the loaded weight of the traveling block is greatly in excess of 250 pounds, and therefore, *Richardson* describes a system where the upper slow down zone is not proportional to the momentum of the traveling block as required by amended Claim 4, but instead, one that is inversely proportional.

Therefore, the primary art selected by the Examiner contradicts what the Examiner states is well known in the art. For this reason, Applicant respectfully reasserts his demand that the Examiner provide documentary authority for the basis of his statement that the limitations of Claim 9, now incorporated into amended Claim 4, are well known in the art. If the Examiner is not able to locate documentary evidence as required, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the pending rejection of amended Claim 4.

B. Dependent Claim 12

The rejection of dependent Claim 12 is respectfully traversed. It is respectfully submitted that the combination of *Richardson* and *Ruddy* fails to teach or suggest all of the recitations enumerated in dependent Claim 12. The Examiner rejected dependent Claim 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being well known in the art.

Applicant hereby submits that the limitations of dependent Claim 12 are not well-known in the art of oil-field operations and that the Examiner's assertion that the limitations of Claim 12 are well-known in the art is erroneous. The Applicant hereby demands that the Examiner provide documentary authority for the basis of his statement that the method described in

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dependent Claim 12 is well known in the art. In support of Applicant's argument, Applicant once again directs the Examiner's attention to Table 1 in columns 7 and 8 of *Richardson*.

As shown in example 3 during a lowering operation with an empty line weight, an empty traveling block begins to slow down sixteen feet from the floor out position as the main brake is applied. *Richardson*, col. 8:15-17 (Table I). On the other hand, as shown in example 4, a loaded traveling block does not reach its slow down region until it is ten feet from the crown out position, when the auxiliary brake is engaged. *Richardson*, col. 8:18-19 (Table I). Thus, at first glance, it appears that the length of the lower slow down zone is inversely proportional to momentum rather than proportion as described in dependent Claim 12.

Further, as discussed previously with regards to amended Claim 4, since momentum is calculated as mass multiplied by velocity, the only way for the empty traveling block moving at 6 feet per second to have a greater momentum (and thus, make the distance proportional to momentum) than the loaded traveling block moving at 2.6 feet per second is for the loaded traveling block to have a mass that is less than 230 percent of the mass of the empty traveling block. To put more exact numbers on this example, if the empty traveling block carries 100 pounds of line weight, the full load of the loaded traveling block could only be 230 pounds. Those of ordinary skill in the art know that the loaded weight of the traveling block is greatly in excess of 230 pounds, and therefore, *Richardson* describes a system where the lower slow down zone is not proportional to the momentum of the traveling block, but instead it describes a method where the slow down distance on both the upper level slow down zone and the lower level slow down zone is inversely proportional to momentum.

Therefore, the primary art selected by the Examiner, *Richardson*, contradicts what the Examiner states is well known in the art. For this reason, Applicant respectfully reasserts his demand that the Examiner provide documentary authority for the basis of his statement that the limitations of Claim 12 are well known in the art. If the Examiner is not able to locate documentary evidence, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the pending rejection of dependent Claim 12.

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II. The Inventions of Dependent Claims 5, 6, 8, and 10-16 are Distinguishable from the Cited Art

The Applicant respectfully submits that the above-identified dependent claims are allowable because the independent claim from which they depend, amended Claim 4, is patentable over the cited references. The Applicant also respectfully traverses the Examiner's assertions about these claims and submits that the recitations of these dependent claims are of patentable significance. Applicant has not addressed each specific rejection of the independent and dependent claims because Applicant submits that the independent claims are allowable over the documents of record, as discussed above. Applicant has not acquiesced to any such rejection and reserves the right to address the patentability of any additional claim features in the future. The Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the pending rejection of Claims 5, 6, 8, and 10-16.

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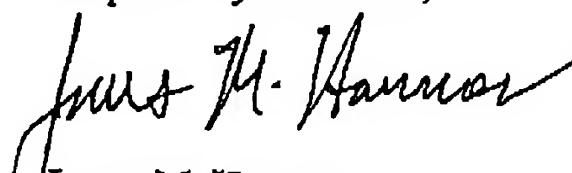
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CONCLUSION

The foregoing is submitted as a full and complete response to the Official Action mailed on January 13, 2006. The Applicant has amended the claims and has submitted remarks to traverse the rejections of pending Claims 4-6, 8, and 10-16. Applicant has shown above that Claims 4-6, 8, and 10-16 are allowable over the art cited by the Examiner and respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw all pending rejections and objections to Claims 4-6, 8, and 10-16.

If the Examiner believes that there are any issues that can be resolved by a telephone conference, or that there are any informalities that can be corrected by an Examiner's amendment, a telephone call to the undersigned at (404) 572-4691 to discuss same is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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